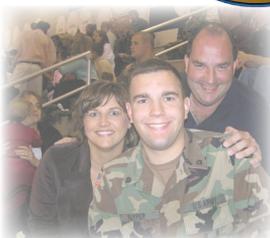




OUR SONS OUR DAUGHTERS

A NATIONAL GUARD PARENT'S GUIDEBOOK TO DEPLOYMENT

BY PAULA SUMRALL



**“WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE, THERE IS
NOTHING MORE IMPORTANT TO SOLDIERS
OR AIRMEN THAN THEIR FAMILY. IN
THE END, IT IS THEIR FAMILY THEY ARE
FIGHTING FOR.”**

-SUSIE BLUM, WIFE OF LTG H STEVEN BLUM,
CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU AND
MOTHER OF MAJ MARC BLUM, MARYLAND
ARMY GUARD

OUR
SONS
OUR
DAUGHTERS

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**NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU
FAMILY PROGRAM OFFICE**
WWW.GUARDFAMILY.ORG

Our Sons,
Our Daughters:
A National Guard
Parent's
Guidebook
to Deployment
By Paula Sumrall

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National Guard Bureau
Family Program Office

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Moms and Dads,

Our sons and our daughters are our pride and joy. Asking them to go into harm's way is not what we would wish for them, and probably wasn't something that we ever anticipated when we were playing baseball in the back yard, celebrating a birthday, or discussing the importance of improving the quality of schoolwork with them. Whether we're parents of young or old, we remain parents in our hearts long after our kids no longer need parenting.

As a son, I reflect with pride on the values that my own parents instilled in me. Perhaps I wasn't always the best son, but as parents tend to do, they loved me anyway. Encouraging me, correcting me, guiding me ... they had a hard job. They persevered. I tried not to disappoint them.

As a dad, I fully appreciated the efforts of my folks as I raised my own son and daughter. My wife, Susie, and I were pleased when our son decided to join the Guard as I had done. He worked hard and enjoyed what he was doing, and we are proud of him. When he deployed, we shared the same concerns and fears that all of you have about deployments. As a Soldier, I can truthfully say that it was easier for me to deploy than to see my son go to war.

As chief of the National Guard Bureau, I am acutely aware that all of our Soldiers and Airmen are your sons and daughters. We strive for excellence in training programs to prepare them for whatever mission lies ahead, whether it is a federal military deployment, a homeland security assignment, or aid and relief during times of national disasters. We are proud of their valor and their service and dedication to our country.

Thank you for instilling in America's sons and daughters the values that were set down by our Founding Fathers and passed on by generations of moms and dads just like you.

God bless you!



H STEVEN BLUM
Lieutenant General, US Army
Chief, National Guard Bureau



From Not So Far Away

This is my luv letter to you

For the time we're so far apart

Know I'm giving you my best

My body, my soul, my heart

This is my luv letter to you - Mom, Dad

For the time we're so far apart

Know I'll give it all I am

My body, my soul, my heart

Committed to my choice to serve

To devote to you the best I know

Because I pledged a life of duty

I'll go where I'm ordered to go

Mom, I see your smile in the stars

Gets me through the darkest night

It's your hopes, prayers and wishes

That helps me endure the fight

I know it's hard sometimes

As I miss each passing season

Don't think so much about me gone

But concentrate on the reason

Daddy, though I'm a Soldier now

Far away, in what seems another world

Though over here I command a unit

Deep in my heart, still your little girl

The best rewards of this life

Are the ones worth fighting for

Freedom and liberty have a cost

It's the price we oft ignore

I am doing this for you, America

My luv for you floods my heart

Know that you are in my soul

So we are never too far apart

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VFW Liaison NGB

FOREWORD

Dear Moms and Dads,

I am a Guard spouse. My husband and I have been married for 19 years. We were not kids when we married. He was an Active Guard Reserve major in the Alabama Army National Guard. He followed me home from church one day to help with my broken hot water heater, which had to be replaced, and we were married less than three months later. A wise decision? So far, so good.

My experience with the military was very limited. My dad served in the Army Air Force during World War II and served in the Air Force Reserve until he retired. I taught school for the Defense Department in Germany where all of my students were children of active-duty Army personnel. Teaching military children was different from teaching in a civilian school and proved to be a real eye-opener for me. When Mike and I married, I knew I was in for a challenge based on what I had experienced while I was teaching.

We moved 11 times during the first 17 years of our marriage. I am an expert! I have lived on Army posts and an Air Force base. I am an expert at buying houses in two or three days. I am also an expert at staging a house to sell it quickly. I have been a certified teacher in four different states as well as for the Defense Department.

My tenure as a Guard spouse started in Huntsville, Ala. Shortly after our marriage, we moved to the Ordnance School at Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland. From there we went

to Kaiserslautern, Germany. Then we were off to purchase our first home together in Springfield, Va., while Mike attended the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. Back to Germany to U.S. Army Europe in Heidelberg, and then to the European Command in Stuttgart. Back to northern Virginia again for a job at the National Guard Bureau. We had barely moved into our new house before we found that we were moving back to Alabama.

Why am I telling you all this? Well, because during this time almost all of what I knew about the military was focused on the active components – the Army, Air Force, Marines, Navy, and Coast Guard. These were the spouses who were part of my military circle. In many ways, I understood their programs and procedures better than I did the National Guard because, quite simply, I had very little contact with Guard families.

Back home in Alabama, Mike served as the United States property and fiscal officer which gave me a wonderful opportunity to learn and understand how the Guard works at the state level. When my husband became the adjutant general of the Alabama Guard several years later on Sept. 1, 2001, I knew I still had a lot to learn. Besides having a new adjutant general, Alabama also had a brand new state family program director, Hubert Chance. Little did we know how our lives and responsibilities were about to change. New TAG, new TAG spouse, new SFPD, and then the horrible events of 9-11! All of us were forever changed as the terrible ordeal of that nightmare day unfolded. Hubert and I learned together about what was needed and required. He took the lead and I did as I was told – literally.

As we prepared to send our Soldiers and Airmen off to Operation Enduring Freedom and then Operation Iraqi Freedom, we were all concerned about whether or not we were doing enough for their families. The Soldiers and Airmen would be fine thanks to their training and sense of mission. But what about the families? We were concerned about the spouses and children and worked like crazy to improve the support system for them. We solicited faith-based organization and community support, made sure that Family Readiness Groups had adequate assistance and information and implemented just about any reasonable idea that anyone suggested.

Sept. 11, 2002, we were standing on the tarmac at Maxwell Air Force Base saying goodbye to members of the 20th Special Forces Group, consisting of Soldiers from Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, North Carolina, Kentucky, Missouri, Illinois, Maryland, and Massachusetts, who were on their way to Afghanistan. It was a very emotional day. I embraced so many people that day and tried to offer words of encouragement even though I was scared to death myself. Spouses and children were saying tearful goodbyes to their Soldiers.

As the time approached for our Guard Soldiers to leave, I realized that a lot of people my age were standing around the edges of the crowd trying not to get in anyone's way. Who were they? Where did they come from? If you are reading this book, you know who they were. They were you. Parents. Moms and dads. Grandmothers and granddads. They had come to see their Soldiers off. Regardless of the time, the place, the date, you were there.

The first of "our own" left home that day to fight the

Global War on Terrorism. We worried. We questioned. We tried to be brave. Our lives had changed, and that has never been more obvious than when that C-130 lumbered down the runway. I remember one little fellow calling out, "Daddy! Daddy!" as the plane lifted off. There were no dry eyes. Mine included. I vividly recall standing there in the drizzling rain praying, "Dear Lord, use me to serve my country. I am too old to put on a uniform, and I don't know what else to do."

Then it was time for us to get back to work knowing that others would leave soon. And they did; more and more of them.

What did I learn from all of this? I learned that I could not begin to understand what a person goes through while trying to maintain a household with a spouse deployed. I could not understand what a child feels when seeing some of the news stories about the war on TV. I could not understand what a mom or dad feels like while being left out of the loop about things that affect their child. The list goes on and on.

My own time to learn about what it feels like finally arrived. My husband accepted the position as deputy director of Logistics at the Central Command and deployed, leaving me to sell the house, leave my job, buy another house in Tampa, Fla., and move there all by myself. Mike was gone for the better part of two years. It was not fun. I volunteered to serve with the Florida National Guard and became the advisor for the 6th Area Support Group. I became the National Guard emissary at CENTCOM, telling the Guard story to the Joint Spouses every chance I got. I volunteered to serve with the Red Cross. I worried. I learned!

My husband's current position at the Pentagon as assistant to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for National Guard matters has us back in Virginia – and together again.

Deployment is an ordeal. Thank goodness I have learned a few things along the way. And I have survived! Because I made it through this ordeal, I hope I can answer some of the questions that have been raised, clarify some of the issues, and address your concerns. Like many of you, I am a late bloomer when it comes to the Guard, but I am definitely proof that it is never too late to learn or to serve. This book is a good example of what it means to be careful about what you pray for, because you might get your answer in a way that you would never have anticipated. I certainly did.

God bless each of you as parents of patriotic Americans! Without you, the parents of our Guard members, our nation would not be what it is today. With you, we will continue to influence and guide America's destiny!

Very respectfully,

Paula Sumrall

The background of the page features a large, semi-transparent seal of the National Guard. The seal is circular with a blue outer ring containing the words "NATIONAL GUARD" at the top and "ALWAYS READY ALWAYS THERE" at the bottom. In the center of the seal is a red circle containing a white silhouette of a Minuteman soldier standing with a rifle. A large white number "1" is positioned above the main title.

1 THE STORY OF THE NATIONAL GUARD

The National Guard traces its origins to the militias of the 13 original English colonies in North America, making the Guard the oldest component of the armed forces of the United States. The Guard has fought in every major war from the Pequot War of 1637 to Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2007.

The opening shots of the American Revolution were fired at Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775, by local militia, and the Continental Army subsequently raised by Congress consisted primarily of former militiamen under the command of a former Virginia militia colonel, George Washington. The militia played a key role in winning the Revolution, and after the war its importance was reaffirmed by its inclusion in the U.S. Constitution. Control of the militia was divided between the individual states and the federal government. This dual state-federal organization still characterizes the National Guard today.

The term "National Guard" was first used in America in 1825 by a New York militia unit in honor of the Marquis de Lafayette. A hero of the Revolution, Lafayette had commanded the Paris militia, the "Garde Nationale," during the early stages of the French Revolution.

While mandatory militia service declined rapidly in most states after the War of 1812, volunteer militia organizations sprung up in its place and formed the bulk of the Union and Confederate armies when war broke out between the states in 1861. The U.S. Army today recognizes Guard units that served on both sides during the Civil War.

The modern National Guard began to emerge in 1903. The National Defense Act of 1916 solidified the Guard's position as the main reserve force for the U.S. Army and increased both federal funding and federal supervision. When units reached Army standards in regard to strength, equipment and skill, they were federally recognized and eligible for federal support. The act also authorized drill pay for Guard members for the first time.

The Guard's involvement in aviation began in 1911 when New York's 1st Company, Signal Corps became the first National Guard unit to get a plane off the ground. Soon, Guardsmen in Missouri and California established flying units of their own.

Did you know?

The term 'National Guard' was first adopted by a New York militia unit in 1825 to honor the Marquis de Lafayette, hero of the American Revolution and former commander of the *Garde Nationale de Paris* during the French Revolution.

The entire National Guard was called up by President Woodrow Wilson to defend the Mexican Border after Pancho Villa's raid into New Mexico in 1916. Many of the Guardsmen returned from their Southwest border duty only to be called again into federal service in 1917 for World War I. Upon its mobilization, the National Guard

doubled the size of the U.S. Army. During the war, most National Guard units were organized into divisions of the American Expeditionary Forces, comprising 40 percent of the total that saw combat and suffering about that same percentage of all U.S. casualties.

During World War II, National Guard units fought in every major theater of the war. Of the first five U.S. Army divisions to enter offensive combat, four of them – the 32nd, 34th, 37th, and Americal Divisions – were Guard divisions. One Guard division, the 29th, participated in the D-Day landings on Omaha Beach on June 6, 1944.

On September 18, 1947, with the establishment of the U.S. Air Force, a new reserve component was created, the Air National Guard, and since that date the National Guard has consisted of both Army and Air units.

The Guard served as a strategic reserve for the Army and Air Force during the Cold War with active service abroad during the Korean War, the Berlin Crisis of 1961-62, the Vietnam War and the Gulf War.

The National Guard's response to the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, highlighted the Guard's traditional role as the first military responder to a domestic emergency. The first military aircraft over New York City and Washington were Air Guard fighters. The first units on the ground assist-

Did you know?

The National Guard supports U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) with the homeland defense mission. USNORTHCOM's job is to conduct necessary operations to prevent threats and acts of aggression against our country.

ing civil authorities were from the Army Guard.

While defending the homeland, the Army and Air Guard have also carried the war to America’s enemies abroad. A significant portion of the force deployed in Afghanistan and Iraq continues to come from the Guard. At one point in 2005, half of the combat brigades in Iraq

Did you know?

Twenty presidents have served in the militia or the National Guard.

were Army National Guard brigades – a percentage of commitment as part of the overall Army effort not seen since the first years of World War II. This extended active duty has also largely validated the Total Force policy of reliance on the Guard and Reserves, to include Guard combat units.

More than 370 years later, the men and women of the National Guard are still defending their neighbors – and their nation. When you call out the Guard, you call out America. 

-Prepared by Lt. Col. Les’ Melnyk

2

PRE-DEPLOYMENT CHECKLIST

Even with the best-laid plans and adequate time to prepare, things can go wrong. As soon as a deployment is announced, start making and executing plans to ensure that everything is taken care of in a timely manner.

- ⇒ The Soldier/Airman should set up a power of attorney (POA) for both financial and health matters. A will and a letter of intent should also be completed. The Judge Advocate General (JAG) office can provide assistance. It is free of charge.
- ⇒ If your son/daughter is a single parent, make sure that you have a POA to act on behalf of the child in case of an emergency. Also make alternative plans for care of the child in case you cannot perform your duties. This is especially important if you have health issues.
- ⇒ Make sure that all mail is forwarded either to the APO address or to a stateside location, with a designated person to be responsible for separating the bills and important documents from junk mail.
- ⇒ Establish a budget. Decide who is to pay the bills. Most Soldiers/Airmen can access their bank accounts and pay

their bills electronically, but this is not always the case. In the event that you are to pay the bills for your son/daughter, make sure that you have their presigned checks available.

✓ If your son/daughter lives in a rental apartment or house, determine if it is more practical for them to continue to rent the space or to move out and put personal items

in a storage unit. Depending on where you live, when your Soldier/Airman returns, they may find it difficult to locate a place to live depending on the housing market and availability of rental properties. Also, depending on how much "stuff" they have, it might cost the same to rent an apartment as it would to rent a storage unit.

Did you know?

The Guard is securing our nation's airports, providing border security – including the presidentially-directed Operation Jump Start on the Southwest border– and providing deterrent and counter-terrorism forces. Armed Guard members have been on duty in New York every day throughout the state since 9/11.

- ✓ If he/she owns a home, who is responsible for cutting the grass and maintaining the property?
- ✓ Where will a car or motorcycle or other personal vehicle be stored? Who is responsible for making sure the registration is current? Who will maintain the insurance?
- ✓ Who is responsible for pets? If you are unable to provide a home for them, please make sure a suitable home is found. If you cannot, please take the animal to one of your local animal shelters where attempts will be made to find a suitable home for it. Euthanasia is not an option at animal

shelters unless the animal is critically ill.

- ✓ Make sure your son/daughter has given Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) written notification to their employer so there will not be a reemployment issue when the deployment ends and they return to the workplace.
- ✓ Make a list of contacts with names, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of every person that your son/daughter might need for whatever reason.
- ✓ Have the same type of information regarding military personnel and your son's or daughter's friends or co-workers made available to you.
- ✓ Create a file of all important documents such as vehicle titles, insurance policies, leases, etc. Have several copies of the official orders.

It is very important for you to know that if your son/daughter is a college student and you claim them as a tax deduction, you cannot claim them as a tax deduction while they are deployed. Even if they plan to return to college the minute the deployment is completed, they still cannot be claimed as a dependent while deployed. It doesn't matter if you consider them a full-time college student,

Did you know?

Since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, the National Guard has added 45 weapons of mass destruction—civil support teams; 17 chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and high-yield explosive enhanced response force packages; 54 computer emergency response teams; six critical infrastructure protection-mission assurance assessment detachments; 54 rapid reaction forces; 54 24-hour-a-day joint operations centers; and numerous other capabilities.

the IRS considers them employed full-time. Parents sometimes count on this tax exemption and are surprised to learn they are not eligible.

The Soldier/Airman is eligible for the refund when his/her taxes are filed. Incidentally, Military One Source offers TurboTax 1040EZ and TurboTax Deluxe for filing federal and state taxes at no cost to the military member. All required forms are accessible online. Go to www.militaryonesource.com.

SERVICEMEMBERS CIVIL RELIEF ACT (SCRA)

National Guard personnel who are activated for a period of at least 30 days are covered by the SCRA. This act is designed to provide the servicemember with financial and legal relief while serving on active duty. The process to implement these provisions is somewhat complicated, so if any of the following apply to your Guardmember, I urge you to request assistance from your local JAG office. Two

Web sites that I have found helpful for this information are www.saveandinvest.org and www.militaryonesource.com.

The following advantages apply:

- Rental leases can be terminated if the deployment lasts longer than 90 days, and vehicle leases can be terminated if the deployment lasts longer than 180 days.
- If the servicemember can't make a

Did you know?

The National Guard is integrated into the homeland defense plans of every state. We exercise in our communities with the civilian emergency planners and emergency responders.

house or car payment, a court order is required for foreclosure.

- If insurance was canceled while the Soldier/Airman was deployed, it can be reinstated upon their return without penalties or waiting periods.
- There is a 6 percent cap on interest rates for loans and credit cards.
- Scheduled court appearances for things such as divorce, bankruptcy, and foreclosure can be postponed for 90 days. Criminal cases are the exception and will proceed in the usual manner.
- Credit can neither be denied nor revoked by lenders if the servicemember has sought relief through the SCRA.

Again, I urge you to seek advice from the JAG if you need help. The attorneys know exactly how to approach these situations and how to best assist the servicemember. Each situation is different, and it would be unwise to assume that the above blanket statements apply in every situation. 

3

FAMILY READINESS GROUPS

The National Guard differs from the active Army and Air Force in that Guard members are dispersed throughout our communities rather than located on or near an active duty military installation. Some units are spread all over the state and some even cross state lines. Others are pulled from across the United States to make up specialized brigades. The active Army and Air Force members are usually located on an Army post or Air Force base. They have commissaries, post exchanges (PX) or base exchanges (BX), gas stations, military clothing sales stores, convenience stores, swimming pools and bowling alleys that make up a compact and efficient community. This makes it easier to stay in touch with other families in circumstances similar to your own.

Within the Guard, we frequently do not know other family members in our loved one's unit. If we don't have small children, we may not attend holiday gatherings that tend to focus on the young people. If we are parents of Guard members, we might not even be invited!

Since the attacks of 9-11, the importance of Family

Readiness Groups (FRGs) has taken on a new status. The FRG has become the primary means of bringing families together to support their Soldiers and Airmen AND to support the family members. Unfortunately, a lot of emphasis is placed on assisting the spouse or children of the deployed. While it is extremely important and necessary that a lot of emphasis is placed on assisting the spouse or children of the deployed, a huge part of our Guard family has been overlooked.

Did you know?

You can find a Family Assistance Center and a wide variety of other helpful organizations in your town with the Local Community Resource Finder located at www.guardfamily.org

A Family Readiness Group consists of spouses, parents, grandparents, retirees, siblings, children, friends, neighbors, and employers. Any individual who has a loved one in the National Guard is welcome. By uniting the family members, community resources, and the chain of command, a bond is forged that can accomplish great things for our Guard personnel and their loved ones. Parents are welcome to join the FRG.

By joining a FRG, you become a link in the communication chain by sharing information with others as well as giving and receiving support. This improves the morale of our Soldiers and Airmen by assuring them that their family members, friends, and other loved ones are receiving friendly and responsible support from others. That lowers their stress, and it also can lower the stress level of the family members who are awaiting their return.

There are some misconceptions that have led to

some people not wanting to get involved. An FRG is NOT a baby-sitting service, a taxi service, a lending institution, a counseling agency, a coffee group or a club. Rank is non-existent. Everyone is equal. An FRG is not part of the casualty notification process. You do not have to pay dues. Every member of the FRG is a volunteer, a real, honest-to-goodness patriotic citizen who has stepped forward to help our men and women in uniform.

Did you know that you could be placed on an e-mail and calling list? You live a long-distance call away? The FRG leader can call from a base or armory at no charge. Mary Mayfield Kelly stays in touch with two her sons' FRG via e-mail. Mary lives in Alabama, but stays connected to her sons' FRG in Alaska.

Did you know?

The National Guard Family Program operates family assistance centers throughout the United States and its territories to provide aid and support for all military family members regardless of military affiliation, whether Guard, Reserve, or active duty.

Robyn Jarrell served as FRG chairperson when her husband's Indiana Guard unit deployed. "I called all the families and found a grandfather listed as a next of kin," she said. "He cried when he heard my voice. We talked for almost three hours. I wrote down what he had concerns about and then I found him all the answers. He continued to say 'thank you,' but what I couldn't make him realize was that I was thankful that he had a grandson willing to join the service to protect me and my children. I was THANKFUL! He had never heard of an FRG. He didn't even know his grandson's unit. He only knew that he was listed on that 'family paper.' When

the unit came home we had a huge celebration. The greatest thing was the grandfather who came and participated. He hugged me, and that did it. We cried together – again.” How wonderful for both this grandfather and his grandson that he was included in this FRG.

The positive response that I received from so many of you about your participation in your FRG is proof that participation is not only important but extremely beneficial. Eva Patton, who serves as the Family Readiness Support coordinator for the 188th Fighter Wing in Arkansas stated, “I encourage the servicemember to get their family involved, share the newsletter so that they can learn more about the unit they belong to, and learn about their mission. If I have the support of the servicemember, I most likely will have the support of the parent. My participation in the Family Program has helped me to work with issues that may arise from time to time. I know their mission. I understand that they have made the sacrifice to serve our country. I experience a calmness as our servicemembers deploy because I am part of the program.” Calmness from being part of the program. I like that.

Betty Galloway is the manager of a Family Assistance Center (FAC) in Alabama. She is also the mother of Col. David Galloway of the Alabama Army Guard. “We try to be especially supportive of families who are experiencing separations from their loved ones for the first time. We talk with them about some of the problems they should expect such as loneliness, insecurity, doubts, fears – all of those negative emotions that one tries to keep tucked away from public

display. We encourage them to draw strength from one another, to help one another, and most of all, to trust in the good Lord to see them through. My experience as a mother and as the spouse of a Guardsman has helped me to help other parents and family members struggling to cope with the many difficult problems during the deployment of their Soldier. I know and understand the emotional trauma associated with separation, the fearful concern for someone in harm's way, and the constant pressure of trying to maintain some form of family cohesion and normality when everything seems to be falling apart some days."

Betty Quasney, mother of Sgt. Jeffrey Bennett of the South Dakota Army Guard, said, "I think as a parent the most important thing you can do is get involved with the Family Support Group. At first you might think that you can handle it on your own and just deal with whatever comes along. That's what I thought I could do. But I soon found out that it was so much easier having others with a deployed son or daughter, or husband or wife, to talk to who understood what you were going through."

When asked how she could be of assistance to other parents whose sons or daughters had not yet been deployed, Carol Middaugh offered "to make sure they go to the FRG meetings. I have found that doing fund raising has given me a positive thing to do. It gives me a goal, and people around me really want to do their part, so it



has been easy to fund raise. It makes us all feel like we are DOING something." I am sure that her son, Capt. Kenneth Middaugh of the Michigan Army Guard, is very proud of her efforts on behalf of his unit.

Willia Cooper served as chairperson of her son's Massachusetts Army Guard unit FRG during his first deployment. Her son is Spc. William Cooper. Willia found that accurate information and meaningful meetings helped others quite a bit. "I established great communications with the commander and first sergeant," she said. "This allowed me to stop rumors (which can be pretty powerful) and create a regular flow of positive information."

Did you know?

Since 1898, 121 recipients of the Medal of Honor have had National Guard service at some point in their career.

Moms and dads, I cannot stress enough the importance of getting the facts straight and avoiding passing on rumors. This was a stumbling block that a large number of you mentioned. One way to avoid this is to stay connected to your FRG.

Minnesota Army Guard mom Mona Ourado, mother of Sgt. Lisa Ourado, was adopted by an FRG in her area because her daughter's unit was situated three hours away. How wonderful!

Join the Family Readiness Group! Make sure your name is on the mailing and e-mail list! Even if you don't have time to participate in most of the activities, you will be able to stay in touch with the parents of your son's or daughter's buddies. These buddies are standing side-by-side with your child in harm's way. They are there for each

other 24/7. Wouldn't it be fabulous if those of us back at home could say the same thing? 

4

EMPLOYER SUPPORT OF THE GUARD AND RESERVE (ESGR)

The unprecedented increase in the utilization of the National Guard to support day-to-day operations as well as the significant and lengthy deployments to support the full spectrum of military operations has raised the level of awareness of the critical readiness element of employer support. Employers are inextricably linked to a strong national defense as they share this precious human resource.

The Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) organization was established in 1972 to promote cooperation and understanding between National Guard and Reserve servicemembers and their civilian employers and to assist in the resolution of issues arising from an employee's military commitment. It is the lead Department of Defense (DoD) organization for this mission under DoD Directive 1250.1, National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve.

Today, a nationwide network of local Employer Support Volunteers is organized into ESGR committees within each state, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. In this way, employer support programs are provided to all National Guard and Reserve servicemembers and their employers in cities and towns throughout our country. With resources and support provided by the national ESGR office and the National Guard Bureau, the ESGR field committees conduct employer support and outreach programs, including information opportunities for servicemembers and employers, ombudsman services, and recognition programs for employers whose human resource policies support and encourage participation in the National Guard and Reserve.

Because of the importance of employer support for retaining quality men and women in the National Guard and Reserve and recognizing the critical contributions of the local ESGR volunteer committees, the National Guard Bureau provides full-time assistance and liaison support to the joint forces headquarters-state and to all of the ESGR field committees.

Programs and services provided by ESGR include:

- ▶ **Information:** Information about the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) is available through www.esgr.mil.
- ▶ **Ombudsman:** Trained ombudsmen provide information, counseling and informal mediation relating to compliance with USERRA.
- ▶ **Statement of Support:** This certificate signed by the

Secretary of Defense gives employers the opportunity to visibly support their National Guard and Reserve employees.

▶ **Employer Orientation:** Employer orientation activities transport employers and supervisors to military training sites where they observe National Guard and Reserve members on duty.

▶ **Employer Recognition:** Awards recognize employers who support a strong National Guard and Reserve force and practice personnel policies that support employee participation in the military.

▶ **Military Member Support:** This program provides National Guard and Reserve servicemembers with important information about their rights and responsibilities under USERRA and ESGR programs and services.

Our nation's defense depends on citizen-service-member–Americans who generally have other civilian careers. This will not change. The ESGR's basic mission continues to be gaining and maintaining support from all public and private employers for the men and women of the National Guard and Reserve, as defined by demonstrated employer commitment to employee military service. The National Guard Bureau is committed to developing strategic partnerships with government agencies, veterans' service organizations and public sector employers, to ensure employment opportu-

Did you

know?

62,411 Army and 10,456 Air National Guard members were mobilized in 1990-1991 for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

nities for our servicemembers with an emphasis on our disabled veterans. One of the most important tasks facing our country is ensuring that our men and women in uniform are fully integrated into the civilian workforce when they return from serving our country.

One of the most exciting programs connected with ESGR is the Boss-Lift Program, which enables employers of our Guardsmen and Reservists to actually visit sites where training is being performed and to see their employees performing their military responsibilities. John Adams, ESGR executive director from Alabama, shared a letter from a Boss-Lift participant. "From a civilian's point of view the trip was informative. I have a deeper respect for the military. I didn't realize that the intensity of the basic training was vital to molding the recruits into a group. I hope that our troops are getting all they need to be safe and secure while fighting in the war. I can't imagine an employer not wanting to support our military. My door will always be open to our military personnel needing employment."

From New Hampshire, Executive Director Ernest Loomis shared a comment from one of his participants: "I have seen the total extent of the commitment, zeal, and high level of training, matched by the sacrifice of both the Soldier AND his family. It makes my loss when he is away for training pale by comparison."

To become an ESGR volunteer and to learn more about the ESGR organization, visit www.esgr.org. 

5

MAIL CALL

Cards, letters, and postcards to your loved ones are delivered faster than packages. Sometimes it can take weeks for a parcel to arrive at its destination, depending on how remote the deployment site is from the postal reception area.

Space Available Mail (SAM) and Parcel Airlift Delivery (PAL) are the most economical ways to send packages overseas. The Flat-Rate boxes available at the post office are also very effective ways to send items, and they probably will arrive more quickly than SAM or PAL packages. Make sure that you pick up the Flat-Rate boxes rather than the Express Delivery ones which are considerably more expensive.

Sample address:
SPC Snuffy Smith
180 FW
APO AE 0X0X0

Do not include the city or country.

Please check with your Family Readiness Group (FRG) or your Soldier/Airman about what items are needed or wanted. Many areas have PX or BX facilities where necessary items can be purchased. If there are special needs or

requirements that arise, your rear detachment noncommissioned officer will inform the FRG so that family members can be notified. Personal toiletry and hygiene items generally do not need to be sent from home. Snack foods, a new paperback by a favorite author, local newspapers, DVDs, and photos seem to be most appreciated.

Do not send items that are prohibited in Islamic countries or illegal. These items include alcoholic beverages, narcotics, munitions, pork and pork by-products, pornography, and any material that is not complimentary to the Islamic religion. Furthermore, don't send anything that might be embarrassing to your loved one—snuggly bunny or those fuzzy bedroom slippers might not be appreciated. Remember, it is better to send consumable items or things that can be shared with others. Having to find storage space for unneeded or unwanted items can cause problems for your Soldier/Airman.

Your servicemember will be able to send mail to you free of charge, so don't send stamped cards or envelopes in hopes of hearing from them more often. They can write

"Free Mail" in the place normally reserved for a stamp, and you should receive it just like you would any other mail.

Susan Fairhurst, who serves as the Wing Family Program coordinator for the Montana Air National Guard, shared an amusing story about her son, Tech. Sgt. Glenn Fairhurst. "Although I have been a military wife for over 30 years, having my

Did you know?

At the peak of the recovery effort following Hurricane Katrina, more than 51,000 Army and Air Guard members were involved.

son join the Air National Guard was a new experience for me," Susan said. "I was pretty worried about how he might handle basic training, having heard horror stories for years. We did not hear from him for a couple of weeks after he left for Texas. Then to add to my concern, we were not home to receive his first couple of calls and I just heard a nervous voice on the answering machine. The day finally came when I could actually talk to him. He was doing okay, but I could tell the demands of basic training were testing him. He asked if I could send him a care package. So I went to work baking his favorite cookies that day. I put the package together as soon as the cookies cooled and ran them to the post office. When I returned from the post office there was a message on the answering machine from my son. 'Mom, please don't send a care package. Someone got a package from home today and the TI ridiculed him and made him do pushups.' My heart sank. The cookies were on their way and I could not do anything about it. I waited for what seemed like an eternity to find out what happened. My son did receive the package. His TI gave him five minutes to eat as many cookies as he could and then made him throw the rest away. He was also assigned some unpleasant duty for two weeks. He survived and so did I. My advice? Do not send anything to basic training without telling this story!" 

Did you know?

The National Guard helps to meet community needs with its Counter Drug Support Program and the Drug Reduction Demand Programs.

6

RAISING GRANDCHILDREN

Many of you have asked for information to help you deal with becoming “parents” again while your son or daughter is deployed. Certainly this is not what you had planned to do after all of your children were grown and gone. For some of you, this is quite stressful. In addition to your concern about your own deployed child, you have now assumed the responsibility for your grandchild or grandchildren.

One of the most important things that you must do is make sure that your grandchild has a military ID and is enrolled in the DEERS (Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System) in order to receive medical benefits. Your son or daughter should already have done this, but you should verify that this has been done. You also should have a power of attorney (POA) to act on the child’s behalf in case of an emergency. Again, this is something that should have been taken care of prior to the deployment, but it is imperative that you check on this. As the primary caregiver, you should have access to these important documents and keep them in a safe place that you can reach quickly during a crisis. Do not let a young child carry the

ID card! It contains personal information, such as a Social Security Number, and can pose a big problem to the parent if it is lost. Also, without the Guard member present, it is extremely difficult to replace a lost ID card.

If you live near a military installation and wish to use the post exchange or base exchange or utilize the medical facility for your grandchild's healthcare concerns, you will need either a military ID, which some of you have if you are military or retired from the military, or an agent's card. The term, "agent's card," may not be used at all installations, but they will have something comparable, regardless of what it is called. You will need proof of identity, some type of picture ID, and proof that you are the legal guardian during the absence of your grandchild's parent. This could be a copy of the military orders or a copy of the power of attorney. Your grandchild must present his or her ID card at the gate. You will then be directed to the appropriate building to receive your agent's card. It is my understanding that most of these are granted for the duration of the unit's deployment, but again, this may vary from installation to installation. Your Family Readiness Group leader will probably be able to provide more information about this.

As a retired teacher, I would tell you that one of the first things to do is to contact your grandchild's school and make an appointment with his or her teacher. Introduce yourself and explain the situation. This is especially important if the child had to transfer to a different school to be closer to your home. Tell the teacher as much as you can about the child's usual way of interacting with peers, aca-

ademic work such as grades and homework, what he/she likes to eat and whether or not they are a “picky” eater, and if there is a chronic medical condition. This type of information enables the teacher to observe if there is a change in the child’s behavior that merits contacting you. For example, the child that has headaches or stomach aches may be missing mom or dad and may simply require a little extra TLC. If normally good grades begin to fall, if homework is not being turned in on time, or if usual favorite foods are not being eaten, you probably have a problem. An obser-

Did you know?

Sergeant Leigh Anne Hester, a Guardswoman with the 617th Military Police Company, Kentucky National Guard, became the first woman in the U.S. military since World War II to earn a Silver Star Medal.

vant teacher will be watching for these signs and will contact you so that a positive resolution can be reached. School counselors and your child’s teacher can be valuable assets.

Military One Source has an excellent booklet entitled “Talking with Children about Violence and War.” This 26-page booklet is available at www.militaryonesource.com or by calling 1-800-342-9647. It is extremely insightful about

children’s concerns. I highly recommend it.



Melody Thoennes, the mother of Spc. Brent Thoennes of the Minnesota Army Guard, offered these words of wisdom: “As I found out the hard way, the teachers are the first ones who will notice a change in your child’s schoolwork and attitudes in school which, if they are not aware of the situation and about things happening

at certain times, they may not communicate some critical information that will let you know there are things that are weighing down your child." In this case, her daughter was struggling with her brother's deployment, not that of a parent. But the effect was the same.

Melody also presented a great example of how to keep things in perspective for our youngsters. "In order to ease my daughter's fears about her brother being killed in Iraq, we went through the analogy of how many obituaries we see in our local community every week and then compared it to how many Soldiers' deaths we hear about. On average, our community of 15,000 sees about one death a day, so if we multiply that and put it into perspective with approximately 120,000 Soldiers in Iraq, we should be hearing about the deaths of eight Soldiers per day. Since we are hearing about fewer deaths than that, we can look at the fact that deaths can occur anywhere and that it is really no more risk for the death of our particular Soldier than there is for each of us to drive, work, sleep, play, and live in our community." Isn't that a great analogy for all of us to use regardless of who we have deployed?

Many school counselors would tell you that if your grandchild seems worried or upset, always ask an open-ended question. For example: "What do you miss most about your dad?" rather than, "Do you miss your dad?" This leads to conversation. Running into a wall of answers such as "yes," "no," or "I don't know," will only frustrate you and will not provide the child an outlet to express his or her feelings. Just because the child is not talking about mom or

dad, or their old school and friends if they have been forced to move to a new school, does not mean that they are not worried or distressed. Listen! Listen! Listen! This applies to young children as well as teenagers.

For preschool children, more hugging and cuddling is probably needed. Keeping pictures of the absent parent around the house reminds the child what the absent parent looks like. Prerecorded videos or cassettes with favorite bedtime stories or lullabies are other ways for them to remember the sound of mommy's or daddy's voice. Several grandparents, and parents too, highly recommend having a Web cam connection on the computer which allows the mom or dad to see baby on a regular basis. You will need to consult your local Internet provider about the best way to do this.

Although attending swimming meets and ball-games may be tiring for you, these types of activities are probably less exhausting than trying to keep up with a youngster on a one-on-one basis. Teamwork and sportsmanship are emphasized, and these principles can be helpful in the home as well as on the field. Participating in sports events also tires the child so that putting them to bed is easier. Aaaah! Relief!

As parents, you already know the importance of keeping a child on a schedule. This is very important. Sticking to a schedule gives the child a sense of security. Knowing what is expected on a daily basis helps set the routine that each of us needs no matter how old we are. Tech. Sgt. Jacqueline Jansson of the Connecticut Air Guard

left her daughter in the care of her parents. Jacqueline emphasized that “having the title of grandparents for some, means authorization to spoil children. I know it’s hard, but try not to overcompensate for a parent being deployed. If the parent does not do it, then please don’t do it. This will help in transitioning back to normal routines for both the deployed and the family members.”

WOW! Now I know that none of you are guilty of spoiling your grandkids. What a notion. Remember that the one who suffers most from being allowed to dictate schedules, activities, and what is acceptable behavior and practice is the child. Be kind, grandmas and grandpas, and don’t allow your grandchildren to become monsters just because their moms or dads are deployed.

Keep a list of important phone numbers handy in case there is an early release from school because of weather conditions. Who will pick up the child from school? Where will he or she go until you can get home from work? What are the names and phone numbers of your grandchild’s friends? If your grandchild rides the bus, it would also be wise to learn the route.

If your grandchild is old enough to accept responsibilities around the house, request that they do so. Even if the bed is crookedly made, the laundry isn’t folded to your specifications, or some of the weeds are still peeping out from the plants in the flower bed, let them try. Let them be

Did you know?

The National Guard is the oldest military organization in the United States. It is 139 years older than the U.S. Army.

part of your team. For younger children especially, planning to surprise mom or dad with the news about what good helpers they have become in the parent's absence is a big incentive.

Picky eaters? That is one of my pet peeves. My two stepsons played this game with me until I discovered how to play the game, and I was the eventual winner. When my husband and I were married, his 5th and 6th grade boys wanted to establish that they were in charge with their new step-mom. Let me assure you, they were not capable of being in charge of anything. After several weeks of whining about what they wanted to eat and with me trying to please them, I got tired of listening to the foolishness and made some changes. After all, I was the adult in charge. And do not ever forget who is in charge. I put each boy in charge of the meal one night a week. Each one had to select the menu, check to see if needed items were in the pantry or refrigerator, make a list if the required items were not available, and accompany me to the grocery store. For several weeks, we could count on at least one dinner of hotdogs, hamburgers or tacos. Finally, the youngest one wanted to try something different. I gave him a cookbook and told him to find something that looked appealing. It was slow going at first, but once he actually prepared a few simple meals based on what he found in the cookbook and did a super job, he was hooked. It does not surprise me at all that this young man became a fantastic cook. His older brother was so embarrassed by his younger brother's success in the kitchen that his skills improved also. The greatest

thing about this was the fact that I no longer had to listen to the whining and complaining.

Have the child keep a journal of special activities. Include pictures of a science project, birthday party, concert or other activity. Have them describe the event or activity in their own words to share with their mom or dad when they return. For those of you who enjoy making scrapbooks, this is a wonderful opportunity to work together with your grandchild on a special project to present to their mom or dad when they return. This would be a great project for rainy days and especially for those of you who have snow days. Also, if you knit, crochet, do woodworking, or play golf or tennis, having your grandchild with you is ideal for sharing and promoting your interest and forming a special bond.

All of these things are suggestions. Many of you already have solved the grandchild issues and can be of immense help and support to others. Share what you have learned. For those of you who are still coping with these issues and need some support, ask. Help is available.

Operation: Military Child Care offers financial assistance to activated and deployed Guard members. If you are your grandchild's legal guardian, you are eligible to apply for admission to a Department of Defense licensed childcare program. Go to www.naccrra.org, the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, and click on Military Child Care. The application is available online, and they can even help you find a provider in your area. 

7

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION

Prior to deployment, every Army and Air Guard member must fill out a Primary Next of Kin (PNOK) form. This includes the name of the individual to be contacted in case of an emergency. If your son/daughter is married, then his/her spouse will probably be listed as the primary person to notify. You may be listed as a Secondary Next of Kin (SNOK). This is the servicemember's decision.

When a death occurs or there is a medical emergency, the military policy is that unit members should not contact the affected family until the proper notification takes place. Unfortunately, this procedure sometimes fails. If you hear from your son or daughter about a casualty, please do not become part of the rumor mill. Respect the rights and privacy of others. Do not alarm others unnecessarily. Take a deep breath and WAIT! Imagine how you would feel if someone contacted you with the incorrect information that your son/daughter was a casualty. I have heard of several incidents where this has occurred. If mass casualties are involved, the notification

Did you know?

Fifty percent of the Army's ground combat units in Iraq in 2005 were from the National Guard.

process can take hours, perhaps days, and must go through the proper military channels. Even the media generally show restraint and concern until families can be notified. Please do the same.

If a death does occur or the servicemember is missing in action (MIA), you will be contacted in person by proper military personnel. This applies to both PNOK and SNOK. Uniformed personnel will make the notification at your home.

In the event of a serious injury or illness, you will be notified by telephone. No notification will be given in case of minor injuries or illnesses.

Harry and Susan Williams received notification that their son, Sgt. John Fuller of the California Army Guard, had been injured.

A FATHER'S STORY

"We received a phone call very early on a Sunday morning, at around 6 a.m. in California. Of course we were all asleep. However, we had been conditioned to answer the phone at odd hours in order for John to call us from Iraq. Due to the time difference between Iraq and the U.S. and our son's hectic schedule with his unit, it was hard for him to call at times convenient to us.

"I quickly went downstairs and answered the phone, half expecting to hear John's voice. The caller, using a practiced routine, identified himself as calling from the Army Casualty Center.

"I immediately knew that John had either been

wounded or injured. The fact that we were being notified by the Army Casualty Center over the phone and not a uniformed casualty assistance officer in person told me that John was still alive. I was both relieved and alarmed.

“What I wanted most to know was ‘how bad is he wounded?’ The individual told me in a manner that was as informative as possible yet officially vague. The casualty center was located on the East Coast, in the Washington area. John was in Iraq. The caller only knew what had been officially reported, and his information was not necessarily up-to-date. Our son had been on a patrol that had been ambushed by the enemy. He was caught in a bomb blast and had also been shot. He suffered multiple, serious wounds and would be sent to a hospital in Germany. The caller could only read what was on the report and knew nothing else. The report was clinical and brief. I understood this and did not try to query the caller for additional details about John’s wounds or his current medical condition. Instead, I wanted him to tell me what the next step would be. I also asked for his name and the best phone numbers to call the casualty center. I took notes on our note pad next to the phone.

“The sergeant told me that the Army would fly my wife and me to the hospital in Germany. We needed to get ready to go in the next two or three days. We would be informed with more details in the next day or so.

“When the call ended, my wife Susan and my daughter came downstairs. We were stunned. We tried to grasp the news. How badly was he wounded? Did he lose any

limbs? Did he have brain damage? Would he ever be the same again? We had so many things to do and very little time before we had to leave to fly to the hospital. For us at that moment, time seemed to stand still. We had been more intellectually prepared to hear of John being killed in action rather than wounded. It took a few moments for us to absorb the situation and to begin to do what we needed to do.

“In summary, I wish to say that the initial caller and the other people that I dealt with at the casualty center were as helpful as they could be and were courteous and efficient.

“We did receive a call later that same morning from a doctor at the Landstuhl Hospital in Germany where, surprisingly, John had already arrived. The doctor had just finished operating on him and gave us a guardedly positive report. I was also able to ask him questions about John’s overall condition and his wounds. This phone call from a complete stranger meant a lot to us. It helped to place the vague report from the casualty center in better context. The next day, Monday, I was able to call the duty nurse in Germany and check on John’s condition. Susan and I also appreciated this very much.

“We never got to Germany. Due to the severity of his wounds, John was transferred to the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington that Tuesday. Thursday, Susan and I flew to Washington and arrived at the intensive care unit two days after John.

“The experience of seeing your child, although a

You can also visit their Web page at www.redcross.org for more information.

There is a rumor that the Red Cross can arrange to have the military member sent home. This is only a rumor. The military commander makes this decision. In some cases, the commander may already have made arrangements for the individual to return home. Also, keep in mind that just because you think a situation is an emergency does not mean that the military commander or the Red Cross will agree with you.

Make sure that the rear detachment noncommissioned officer knows your whereabouts should you go on vacation or out of town for business. Personally, I would also contact the family readiness group leader as well. If you have friendly neighbors, also let them know if and when you plan to be away.

Under no circumstances should you give out the Social Security Number of your son/daughter. Unscrupulous individuals have pretended to have information about a Soldier/Airman being injured and have requested the SSN for verification. They take advantage of the parents'/spouses' fear and concern to get this information for identity theft purposes. **YOU WILL NEVER BE ASKED TO GIVE OUT A SSN IF THERE IS A CASUALTY NOTIFICATION.**

Also, beware of “promotional” offers aimed at stealing the identity of your loved one by requesting personal information. Yes, people will lie and take advantage of our military members, shameful as that is. Make sure that you don't become part of the problem. 

8

WOUNDED WARRIORS

Many of you have heard of the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, the stabilization point for our injured and ill military members prior to their return to the states. If you don't have prior military experience, the following things I tell you will probably be a real eye-opener. For those of you who have not traveled outside of the United States, I hope to reassure you.

First, Landstuhl features a typical big hospital environment: offices, wards, pharmacy, etc. It is securely enclosed with guards at the gates. If you don't belong there, you don't get on the installation. There is no need to worry about terrorists. The German police are vigilant as are U.S. security personnel. The local American military community supports activities with volunteers. The American Red Cross has an office in the building as do several other organizations that are also available stateside. For example, there is a support group for breast cancer patients and for new moms. The chaplain's office has a staff that works very hard to help meet the needs of the sick and injured as well as support and assist the families who are called to the bedsides of loved ones.

Would I have concerns about having my son or daughter at Landstuhl in Germany where I don't speak the language? Absolutely not! Why? I lived there for two years and taught school at Landstuhl Middle School which is just outside the hospital. All of my medical appointments were there. I waited in line at the pharmacy. This is a regular U.S. military hospital.

Ramstein Air Base is about a 10-minute drive away, and Vogelweh, an Army installation, is less than that. At one time, more than 165,000 American military people lived in the Kaiserslautern/Landstuhl area. It was the largest expatriate group of Americans outside of the continental U.S. Because of this, most of the Germans speak English. If you patronize a hotel, store or restaurant, you can communicate in English with ease. Most restaurants have menus in English. Pizza Hut® is down the hill from the hospital. McDonald's®, Burger King® and Kentucky Fried Chicken® are close by. Being in this part of Germany is almost like being at home.

The reason I tell you this is because some of you may need to meet your son/daughter there. People do have medical problems other than war-related injuries that might cause them to be sent to Landstuhl. If your son had pneumonia, wouldn't you want to be there? If your daughter had gynecological problems that required hospitalization, wouldn't you want to be there?

My advice is to get a passport if you do not already have one. If there is an emergency, the military will ensure that you get there whether you have a passport or not. If

the situation is not considered an emergency, you are on your own. Get the picture? Have passport, can travel.

You can apply for a passport at your local post office. The cost is based on the age of the applicant and includes the actual passport as well as the processing fee which is paid to the Department of State. The cost is \$97 for people 16 and older. It is \$82 for those under 16. The application requires a small photo, which can be taken at most large postal facilities. Check before you go. The time to process a passport can be lengthy, so do not wait until the last minute to apply. Proof of U.S citizenship is required. You will also need to take with you to the post office your proof of identification, such as a previous passport, your driver's license, or military ID.

A passport could come in handy if you would also like to meet your Guard member in Europe for some rest and recreation. Most of your sons and daughters will probably prefer to come stateside for R&R, but some may want to share a family vacation in Europe.

The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 requires that people traveling from the United States to Canada, Mexico, Bermuda and the Caribbean must have a passport effective September 2007. People traveling to the Caribbean and Bermuda must have a passport effective June 2009. It would be a good idea to get one if you don't already have one. For those of you who have family living outside of the U.S., it's a good idea anyway. Your Guard member might want to visit family members living outside of the U.S. when they return from

deployment.

Wendy Matheson, a Minnesota mom, explained that her son, Sgt. Tom Sauvageau, was injured and sent to Landstuhl but was there for only a few days before returning to his duty station. She and her husband later met Tom in Germany while he was on a two-week leave. Her other son, Cpl. Shane Sauvageau, was deployed at the same time to a different area, but could not take leave at the same time. Would this family reunion have been possible without a passport? It was too bad that Shane was unable to enjoy this family vacation.

AFTER LANDSTUHL

When the Soldier/Airman is released from Landstuhl, he/she will either return to their unit to complete the deployment or will be transferred to a stateside medical facility. Most go to either Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington D.C. or to Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. Both provide excellent medical care. You can access both of their Web sites for more information: www.wramc.amedd.army.mil and www.bamc.amedd.mil.

There is a wonderful packet of information called "Our Hero Handbook" that pertains to the medical process and includes support information for those hospitalized at Walter Reed. It is available at the Web site. The handbook has great information that might prove useful even if you do not have a loved one hospitalized there. There are several articles on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, stress, and how to use the Internet.

After release from these facilities, patients can be assigned to a Community-Based Health Care Organization closer to home, depending on the circumstances. The facility must be able to accommodate the patient's needs and have room in their program. Space is limited. The patient must also be able to travel back and forth on their own for appointments.

Back in your home state, a Transition Assistance Advisor (TAA) is available to ensure that needed services are provided. The TAA serves as a conduit for information and as a referral consultant to direct the Soldier/Airman to needed services such as Veterans Affairs, vocational rehabilitation, and employment opportunities. They can even see that homes or vehicles are modified to accommodate an injured individual before his/her return if such services are

required. The TAAs work closely with the state Family Program directors and wing coordinators to help families assist their wounded warriors. They also work very closely with veteran's service organizations to provide further assistance and support.

Prior to leaving the hospital, the Soldier/Airman will receive the name and phone number of the TAA in their home

state. They will also be contacted by the TAA before returning home to let them know that the TAA is available and ready and willing to become their advocate. The wounded warriors and their families can count on this support for as long as it is needed. 

Did you know?

During the Korean War, 138,600 Army and 45,594 Air National Guardsmen were mobilized for active duty.

9

POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)

What is PTSD? How do I recognize it? What can be done about it?

In previous conflicts, terms like “shell shock” or “battle fatigue” were used to describe a condition that affected some military members during and after episodes of extreme stress. Also, after previous conflicts the return home took much longer than it does today. This delayed return allowed military members to talk to their buddies and resolve issues connected with battle and its aftermath. They had time to think about their homecoming, make plans, and relax.

Today, the reintegration of our Guard members is a rapid process. For Army Guard Soldiers, the process takes only a few days. For Air Guard members, the return can be immediate. For some of our sons and daughters, the return is too rapid to make a completely healthy adjustment. Assistance is needed.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is not an insurmountable problem, but a problem. A medical examination is

required to determine if the problem is actually PTSD or simply a reintegration adjustment. Battle takes its emotional and mental toll on whoever experiences it. What many people do not understand is that it is not only those who experience battle that suffer from this malady.

Truck drivers and convoy guards routinely have problems with PTSD. Having to constantly be on guard against an unseen enemy is difficult. Air Guard personnel coming home from a mission have virtually no time to acclimate themselves to the change in their circumstances.

What are the symptoms?

- ◆ Sleep disorders – sleeplessness, nightmares
- ◆ Hypervigilance – the feeling of constantly being on guard, irritability, an exaggerated startle response to loud noises
- ◆ Restlessness – very nervous, jittery
- ◆ Avoidance – wanting to be alone rather than with family and friends, avoiding social situations
- ◆ Flashbacks

What are the consequences?

- ◆ Physical complaints – headaches, stomach aches, chest pains, dizziness
- ◆ Eating disorders
- ◆ Alcohol and substance abuse
- ◆ Aggressive behavior toward others
- ◆ Job difficulties and unemployment
- ◆ Homelessness
- ◆ Talk of suicide or suicide attempts

◆Reckless driving

I am not a psychiatrist or a psychologist, but I believe that I could recognize any of the symptoms that I have mentioned, especially if it involves a son or daughter. I can recognize that there might be a problem. I can attempt to help my son or daughter even if they no longer live at home. So can you. Do not sit idly by if you suspect they need your help. The problem will not go away. In all probability, it will get worse if it is ignored.

Every Soldier and Airman is supposed to be questioned upon their return about whether or not they are experiencing any of the problems that I have listed. Most will say “no” because of their eagerness to get home with family and friends.

Young people, in particular, exhibit very risky behavior behind the wheel of a car or on a motorcycle. They still seem to want the adrenaline rush which they encountered during tense situations while deployed. I spoke with the mom of a Marine who was killed in a car accident involving speeding and reckless driving after he had survived two deployments to Iraq. What a tragedy!

Did you know?

Transition Assistance Advisors (TAA) are available in every state and territory to help returning warriors with referrals for Veterans Administration assistance, vocational rehabilitation, post traumatic stress disorder issues, and home and vehicle modifications, if required.

What can I do?

Watch. Listen. Do not hesitate to talk to your son/

daughter if any of these symptoms are apparent. Help is available. Physicians, counselors, and clergy are good resources to find the proper help. Battle buddies may recognize problems that need to be addressed and know how to work within the military system to find the help that is needed.

Encourage your son/daughter to visit a veterans center. Run by the Veterans Administration, vet centers are manned by veterans trained to help their fellow warriors. Easily found in most communities, they provide some of the strongest support for our veterans in that they can help with readjustment issues as well as encourage the Soldier/Airman who appears to be struggling with PTSD issues to seek medical help. You want the vet center personnel as your advocate! The Guardfamily.org Web site offers a local community resource finder that can help you find a veterans center in your area.

Did you know?

Astronaut Charles 'Pete' Conrad, Jr., the commander of Apollo XII, was the third man to walk on the moon. He started his military career as a private in the Pennsylvania National Guard.

Military One Source offers six free counseling sessions at no cost to the military or the family member. If your son/daughter will not talk to you about the problem, call Military One Source for suggestions on how you can assist. Contact www.militaryonesource.com or 1-800-342-9647. This service is confidential.

Another excellent resource is www.battlemind.org. It features a super video that is extremely helpful and offers suggestions about how to handle various situations that

occur with PTSD. It is highly recommended by experts.

The Mental Health Self-Assessment Program (MHSAP) features anonymous online screening for mental health and alcohol problems at www.MilitaryMentalHealth.org. This might also prove useful if your son/daughter is reluctant to seek medical help. There is an assessment to help parents determine if their child is suffering from depression or is exhibiting suicidal tendencies. 🧑

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PARENTAL WISDOM – VOICES OF EXPERIENCE

We learn from each other. Thank goodness we don't have to stumble along alone. Many parents submitted information and issues for consideration as I was writing this book. Some shared personal experiences and amusing anecdotes. I am sure you will recognize yourselves, even if you are not the one being quoted.

I have not quoted as many of you as I would have liked, but only because so many of you told me the same things about pride, support and love. As parents, you have so much in common and so much to offer other parents who have yet to go through the deployment process. God bless you!

Here are the best of the best.

How often does or did your son/daughter contact you?

"Well, the first month's phone bill was just over \$1,500. I almost fell over when I opened that first bill. We have since signed on for Internet-based phone service that provides a

local number.”

-Mary Connolly, mom of 2nd Lt. Douglas Wenson, Massachusetts Army Guard

“I heard from my son usually once a week. I didn’t worry ‘till I hadn’t heard from him for over two weeks. I used to send a weekly ‘nag’ e-mail in which I nagged him for not keeping in touch more, and that I was glad he was behind a desk the whole time to which he replied ‘Yes, Mother,’ all tongue-in-cheek, though with plenty of smiley faces.”

-Lesley Butts, mom of Sgt. Timothy Butts, Virginia Army Guard

“Due to the nature of her position with the Army National Guard, my daughter was able to e-mail me daily, if only a few words: ‘Hi Mom,

I’m OK. Love you.’ That was sufficient as I just wanted and needed to know that she was OK. She was able to call me approximately once every 10 days. I learned quickly to say ‘I love you’ at the beginning

of the telephone conversations because it was not uncommon for the phone line to abruptly go dead right smack in the middle of the conversation. When this happened she was not always able to call me back. The first few times this happened it was frightening because it seemed like some-

Did you know?

The National Guard State Partnership Program (SPP) links U.S. states with a partner country to improve bilateral relationships with the U.S. These partnerships are designed to improve military relations, to assist with the development of democratic institutions, foster open market economies to help develop stability, and project and represent U.S. humanitarian values.

thing bad had happened. After a few times, I got used to it and learned to work with it!"

-Sharon Figler, mom of Spc. Elisa Donato, New York Army Guard

"She usually calls once a week. Some of her fellow Guardsmen see her as their daughter as many have a daughter her age. They watch over her."

-Regena Hommertzheim, mom of Pfc. Ashlee Hommertzheim, Kansas Army Guard

"We would send Jeff disposable cameras, and he would send them back to us to develop. I would always rush to get them developed just to see him. The first one we got, I waited an hour in Wal-Mart for them to get done and the first picture I saw was him in the back of a truck with a machine gun. I completely lost it in the store. I'm sure people thought I was crazy as I left the store crying."

-Betty Quasney, mom of Sgt. Jeffrey Bennett, South Dakota Army Guard

"You must understand that they are at war, not on a vacation where they can get to the phone any time. They sometimes have to wait in long lines to use the phone and, yes, some phones have timers on them, which allows them to speak for so many minutes."

-Diane Lang, mom of Chief Warrant Officer 2 William Rollefson, Minnesota Army Guard

How do you react to negative news stories about our military? What keeps you focused on the mission?

“Remembering what the atmosphere was like outside after 9-11. I remember standing outside and looking to the quiet, still skies and that eerie feeling I got. Then I remember how I wanted to do something so this would never have to happen in this country again.”

-Bobbie Drew, mom of Chief Warrant Officer 2 Sam Sutton, Kansas Army Guard

“Frankly, it angers me when people speak negatively about our troops. I take every opportunity to shake the hands of those in uniform and thank them for their service to our country. I hope that when I do this it not only blesses the one in uniform but serves as an example to those around. I also speak quite boldly about being proud of those who serve to keep us free. That freedom is also what keeps me focused on the military’s mission. War over there means no war over here. I have family who fought in other wars. Their willingness kept and keeps America safe.”

-Kelly Novak, mom of Senior Airman Jordan Novak, Oregon Air Guard

“I believe that everybody is entitled to their own opinion, and that’s what I say. I generally follow up with a couple of questions. (1) Where did you hear this information? (2) Have you had any conversations with any Soldiers directly

involved in this conflict? Then I voice my opinion. I have had to walk away sometimes, but that can be expected."

-Gwen Smith, mom of Sgt. 1st Class Aliska Pond, Illinois Army Guard

STAYING BUSY/HELPING OTHERS

"I stayed focused by sending care packages, care packages, and more care packages ... to my son and other Soldiers we knew who were serving with him. I sent candy and small items for Matt to give to the Iraqi children, and I thought about the day when the violent existence for those children would come to an end. My 'mission' became getting comforts of home to Iraq, so I shopped, baked, and boxed up hundreds of packages. We had a contest among families in the community to see who could get the most in the Flat-Rate boxes ... and the post office kept track of whose boxes weighed the most. I didn't get first place in that contest, but I came in a close second. My husband filled in as a surrogate 'daddy' for our friends who had little boys. We babysat for young children to give the moms a break ... invited Soldiers' families to accompany us on trips to the lake, camping trips, and other activities."

-Becky Harvey, mom of Spc. Matt Harvey, Idaho Army Guard

"We have been shipping him stuffed animals and candy for the children there, which makes them feel better to put a

smile on the face of the kids, and it helps them to be positive.”

-Janet Strahl, mom of Staff Sgt. Sarah Strahl and Sgt. Kaleb Strahl, Michigan Army Guard

“I initiated, coordinated, and encouraged regular support between anyone who wanted to participate. We shared phone numbers, addresses, and e-mail addresses. If one of us heard from our Soldier, we would share the information with the others. I coordinated support meetings, potluck luncheons, care package drives and meetings to put together care packages for our Soldiers, and special gatherings to provide support for the children of our Soldiers such as special holiday parties. To raise money for postage, I coordinated the production of two wonderful patriotic cookbooks.”

-Sharon Figler, mom of Spc. Elisa Donato, New York Army Guard

“When we heard about the extension that our (Minnesota) Soldiers would be going through, several of us got together at a local restaurant just to talk and enjoy being with someone else in the same situation. Also, by being part of the group, we can pitch in and help families that need help. It is much easier to ask for help from someone who knows what is happening. The only problem I have seen is that sometimes the wives don’t understand that the parents are going through as much heartache as they are. We had one wife who said that, as mothers, we did not understand what she was going through not having her

husband at home. Her husband wasn't seeing his daughter do new things, and she had to deal with all the household problems. I agree she has things to be upset about. But as I said to someone else, as a young wife, if she should lose her husband, she is young enough to marry again and have more children. If I lose my son, that is it. I can't replace him. I know this sounds terrible when I say it, but I don't think everyone understands what the parents go through."

-Deanna Meyer, mom of Spc. Daniel Meyer, Minnesota Army Guard

"When Ted was in Kosovo, my kindergarten classes became pen pals to his unit. He took pictures of each of the guys and sent them to me. I assigned a Soldier to each student. The student had his picture, address, and information about the tour of duty. This was given to the families at home in case any of them wanted to communicate to the Soldier on their own. Once a month we wrote a dictated letter to the troops. On the back of the letter, each child drew a picture for their own Soldier. Each Soldier then got a letter once a month. Some of the Soldiers even wrote back to their pen pals. We also conducted a school-wide collection of school supplies for the schools in the towns around the Soldiers' compound. We sent 26 boxes to Kosovo, with the postage paid by generous parents. Ted sent back pictures of his guys delivering the supplies, with the smiles on the children's faces! He also sent a letter to the schoolchildren, thanking them for all their help and telling them how much it meant to the children and the teachers. These chil-

dren still ask how Ted is doing.”

-Marie Mavencamp, mom of Sgt. 1st Class Theodore Mavencamp, Minnesota Army Guard

“Ask your Soldier if there are others in their unit who need ‘adopting’ and find someone, such as a church group if you can’t do it yourself, to write to them and send care packages. The one thing several of the Soldiers said to me was that they appreciated me for sending them letters and encouraging them and to know that they were not forgotten.”

-Deborah Liliker, mom of Spc. Joseph Liliker, Tennessee Army Guard

“There’s a wonderful Web site for moms: www.military-moms.net. It’s great for support and just great to vent worries without worrying about being judged. For basic cut-to-the-chase information, www.military.com is the site to go to.”

-Kathy Oye, mom of Spc. Pete Oye, Illinois Army Guard

“You will find that there will be days when a song, an object, or the slightest thing makes you think about your child, and you may even get teary eyed. So keep tissues handy, handle the moment, and keep on going. Please know that this is normal. We all do it.”

-Lois Tuma, mom of Sgt. Steven Tuma, Minnesota Army Guard

HIGHEST PRIORITY

"Everyone should serve. All have the same rights and privileges without paying dues. If your views are negative, talk to elected officials about affecting a change. Set the example!"

-Retired Col. Chuck Wilz, U.S. Army, dad of retired Col. Greg Wilz, retired Maj. Gary Wilz, Lt. Col. Giselle Wilz, and Maj. Grant Wilz, North Dakota Army Guard

(This amazing family has 128 total years of military service.)

"I also think there would be a fundamental difficulty for me, as a career Soldier, to feel anything other than fully supportive. We all carry a bit of a martyr complex in this line of work, but it would be significantly hypocritical of me to believe that my child had any less responsibility than someone else. I fly a double blue star flag in the front window. I am certain that no one in my neighborhood has any idea what it means. For some reason, that feels empowering to me."

-Col. Donald Kerr, dad of Sgt. Ashley Kerr, father-in-law of 1st Lt. Stephen Babcock, Minnesota Army Guard

"It is harder having a loved one deployed than going yourself."

-LTG H Steven Blum, dad of Maj. Marc Blum, Maryland Army Guard

"No doubt about it, there is anxiety, but you cannot let it overcome you. Soldiering is and always has been about war. We are not at war. We are fighting a minority of terrorists who are, by utilizing their anarchist strategies, creating

fear and terror among the majority. I know that it is difficult to identify the enemy there. With good intelligence, teamwork, and leadership, our Soldiers will do well, but we need the full support of those countries. That is where the real anxiety comes into play. In the Muslim world, there is no sense of jointly unifying to overcome the country's problems. Many of their leadership live in fear for their lives."

-Retired Chief Warrant Officer 4 Ronald Mullinax, dad of 1st Lt. Mark Mullinax, Kansas Army Guard

"Stay strong for your Soldiers. Let them know how much you love them and care about them. Tell them you love them. Take care of yourselves physically and mentally. Seek help if you need it. Turn to family, friends, and your support group."

-Mary and David McHugh, parents of Sgt. David McHugh, Massachusetts Army Guard

"Parents who share stories about their children being in harm's way know exactly how the others feel. If you haven't walked in one's shoes, you simply can't relate to how they feel. Calling to check on one another, writing notes of encouragement, even sending letters and packages to their children overseas is such a wonderful act. If you love my child, you love me."

-Kelly Novak, mom of Senior Airman Jordan Novak, Oregon Air Guard

"One thing that bothers us is when we hear on the news

about a parent of a Guardsman who says, 'He joined to help get his schooling paid for.' When both our kids wanted to join, we made sure they realized they were joining the Army!"

-Karen Serfass, mom of Staff Sgt. William Fox and Sgt. Sarah Serfass, Michigan Army Guard

"My thoughts and prayers are with him each day knowing that he is not afraid, but has deep concern for the safety and welfare of the men and women in his command. During our last conversation before he left this time, we talked about staying focused on the mission (I know by being a volunteer with our state family program and working with families that this can become a problem with commanders). With communication so instant, a family member can cause a Soldier/Airman to become complacent and forget where they are headed."

-Wallace Paschal, dad of Col. Jack Paschal, Florida Air Guard

"What you call brave, I call scared, shaking, hiding in the corner on your knees, praying that God would get you through it. Tell all the parents to get off the couch, turn the TV off, get out of the house and do something. You are NOT going to find out through the news if your child is still alive. You will be the first to know that, not CNN. If you are worried that you will miss their call, forward your house phone to your cell phone. If you worry that you will miss their turn on a computer, have your child add your cell number to his IM buddy list. Most of the time he will be

sleeping while you are awake, anyway. Oh, and make sure you have a couple of his/her buddies on your buddy list. Once I realized I couldn't hug up to a TV or phone, life got a little easier. And my nerves got a little steadier. And then I became an Internet switchboard. Guys from Mark's unit knew I have a cable connection so they could buzz me at all hours of the night to call their moms, dads, girlfriends, or wives and tell them to get up and get on the computer. They all had permission to do this, of course. My husband even got a couple of extra speakers so one could be placed in the bedroom with us. I was being called 'mom' by half the guys in the unit. If my husband heard the buzz before I did, he would roll over and say 'Honey, one of your boys needs you.' I'm sure you have guessed by now that Mark's unit and our Family Readiness Group hold a very special place in my heart."

-Betty Lambert, mom of Spc. Mark Lambert Jr., Mississippi Army Guard

"Let your Soldiers know how much you love them and how proud you are of them. Stand up for your child and for our freedom. There are some out there who don't care what they say or do to hurt you, but you know what is RIGHT!"

-Bonita Mead, mom of Sergeants Terry Mead and Jerry Mead, Kansas Army Guard; grandmother of Spc. Cassie Mead, Arkansas Army Guard

"Pray – and pray some more! My father once told me, 'Believe half of what you see and nothing of what you hear.' I hope I

can do this!"

-Ida Mae Apostolou, mom of Staff Sgt. Andrew Apostolou, Illinois Air Guard

"I pray for him every day and remember what a friend said to me: 'God doesn't know borders. He is the same there as He is here.'"

-Tracey Martin, mom of Cpl. Randy Catterson, Alaska Army Guard

Amen! 

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ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

From the moment we learn of our loved one's deployment date, we long for the reunion. We think about it, we plan, we anticipate. Oddly enough, the parental expectations are almost unanimous. Beyond the homecoming festivities that are celebrated across the United States, coming home means more than parades, parties and fanfare. Homecoming is a grateful heart and an overwhelming sense of relief.

What things were you most looking forward to when your son/daughter returned?

"Being able to sleep the night."

-Terri Hammill, mom of Spc. Joshua Hammill, New Jersey Army Guard

"I have been telling my husband that I finally get to cry when John comes home. I haven't been able to do that because his kids have seen too many tears since he got his notice that he was leaving. They have to have someone

around who appears calm.”

-Becky Engels, mom of Maj. John Engels, Minnesota Army Guard

“Just a big hug and to have his belongings all over the house again.”

-Denise Spaulding, mom of Spc. Justin Spaulding, New Hampshire Army Guard

“I am looking forward to my son being back in college. I want him to graduate and begin to live a normal life. I am looking forward to being able to pick up the phone and call him whenever I want and know that he will be on the other end of the line. I want to know that this experience has helped him to see the world differently and that he is proud to be a Soldier.”

-Annette Kuyper, mom of Sgt. Jared Kuyper, Minnesota Army Guard

“When my son enlisted, the recruiter gave him a T-shirt that read, ‘Every generation has its heroes . . . Mine is no different.’ We are very much interested in hearing all about Rich’s experiences and what his feelings are on the war in Iraq. One of the first questions will be ‘Do you feel you’ve made a difference?’ ”

-Colleen and Rick Lochner, parents of Spc. Rich Lochner, Illinois Army Guard

In addition to the return of our children to their homes and their normal routines of either going to work or

school, we can look with pride on the fact that these men and women stepped forward to serve their country as so many before them have done. Together we will anxiously wait and hope for the difference to become evident in all of the countries where they have invested so much time and energy. Regardless of where our children were deployed – Afghanistan, Iraq, Bosnia, Kosovo or Kuwait – our hearts also did a tour of duty.

FUN AND GAMES

You raised them. You know them. Sometimes you were embarrassed by their antics and sloppy ways. Sometimes you wondered if they would ever grow up. Sometimes you questioned your own sanity. Whatever went through your mind, however, was insignificant to your worry and concern about their well-being while they were deployed. Let me assure you that there have been good times, those moments of intense pleasure and amusement, even if you were the ones providing the entertainment intentionally or not.

“He had us send him his guitar, which he had just started to play when he was deployed. He now is in a band, so he was serious about it. One of the few songs he knew was ‘The Star Spangled Banner,’ and I think he drove everyone crazy

Did you know?

Every state and territory has a state family program director (SFPD) responsible for coordinating programs and activities to support our family members. Every Air Guard wing has a family coordinator whose primary function is to support family programs. See www.guardfamily.org/ to locate one in your area.

playing it. Finally the tent group just accepted it. But every time he would play it, whoever was around would jump to attention and at the end would shout, 'Play ball!' Trey still smiles when he hears the song and thinks about his team in Kuwait."

-Lucretia Barbee, mom of Sgt. 1st Class Trey Barbee, Oklahoma Army Guard

"Many times there were other Soldiers on the Army Knowledge Online who would attempt to communicate with me. I would have to explain that I was a middle-aged mother of a Soldier, waiting for my son to get online, not some hot young single chick. Sometimes the Soldiers didn't care. They were homesick and just wanted someone, anyone, to chat with. One of the Soldiers wanted to swap pictures with me even after I told him I was the married mother of three grown children. After that, Matt handed down orders to me that I was not allowed to talk to strangers online."

-Becky Harvey, mom of Spc. Matthew Harvey, Idaho Army Guard

"Our son was getting a little tired of the heat and asked us to send him a pool. A friend of ours donated an elephant inflatable pool complete with trunk and rings to toss. It took him forever to fill this pool with bottled water because you can't just grab a hose and turn on a spigot. There is no running water. But he said it was well worth it for a little fun."

-Val Koelln, mom of Spc. Jeremy Koelln, Minnesota Army Guard

“My son-in-law has been able to e-mail constantly. On his first deployment he was not married yet to my daughter. They were getting married as soon as he got home. Of course, he missed all the tedious details of getting ready for the wedding. I always kidded him that we were going to have a wedding and that it would just be nicer if he got home, but it was happening either way. At the wedding shower we e-mailed him a bunch of questions and my daughter had to answer what she thought he would say. We all had great laughs over his answers from thousands of miles away.”

-Darcey Spenny, mom of Staff Sgt. Devon White and mother-in-law of Staff Sgt. Joshua White, Illinois Air Guard

“He called his dad one time in the middle of the night because his truck vapor-locked, due to the high heat, and his dad told him what to do to get it running again, and it worked! That was kind of funny that he called from way over there to find out how to fix his truck so that he did not have to wait for a maintenance team to show up and assist him. Pretty cool. He also sent me a video of a bet that he had with two buddies. The bet: to eat three cans of sausages in a minute. That video was really funny. He could not do it. So he did not get the five dollars that was offered him to perform the feat. He was gagging after shoving a can and a half in his mouth. Gross but funny.”

-Anita Rhodes, mom of Sgt. Brian Dear, Kansas Army Guard

“The funniest thing I can think of that he told me about is

when they were getting to know some camels. One in particular took a liking to him until it decided to taste him."

-Sheila VanDeBogart, mom of Spc. Adam VanDeBogart, Alaska Army Guard

"We have been sending him goodie boxes frequently during his deployment. Tim is very health conscious, and we try not to send a lot of sweet items. However, for Valentines Day we did send some chocolates, etc. He responded in an e-mail that he appreciated the package, but in the next care package would we replace the sweets with little snakes (he meant snacks) like cheese spread and crackers. So the next package did have cheese spread and crackers and a couple of rubber snakes!"

-Sharon Rhoades (Colorado), mom of Sgt. Tim Rhoades, Alaska Army Guard

"I mentioned to a lady in Prattville how Larry said some of the guys from Prattville had said they wished they could smell the paper mill. I said 'Why in the world would you want to do that?' He said then they would know they were home."

-Linda Chance, mom of Sgt. 1st Class Larry Chance, Alabama Army Guard

"Steven received three Christmas trees this year from me and other family members. He loved every one and had one in his room. He placed the other two outside in the sand. Others did the same thing, and he said it was a fes-

tive site when walking back to his room. Steven has told me many times that coming back to his bunk after being out for four to six days at a time and seeing a pile of mail on his bunk is the best pick-me-up he has.”

-Lois and Ray Tuma, parents of Sgt. Steven Tuma, Minnesota Army Guard

“During his term in Bosnia, the USO team featuring Wayne Newton, the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders, and other singers performed for the Soldiers stationed over there. He got to talk with Wayne Newton. Wayne asked my son if he would like to have him call anyone when he got back to the U.S. Rickey told him to call his mother. He did call me. I was very surprised since Rickey had not mentioned to me that he had told him to call me.”

-Brenda Wooley, mom of Staff Sgt. Rickey Jordan, Mississippi Army Guard

“One day my daughter-in-law brought over her video cameras so we could see him face to face while we IMed him. He was in a base that had the video cameras on the computers. We were waiting for the hookup and I went in to change my clothes after work. My husband yelled to me that they were hooked up and we could see each other. I was so excited that I ran into the computer room to see him and sat down and began to type in a ‘hello.’ He could see me in the camera and did a double take. I had forgotten to button up my shirt, and he had typed out in caps, ‘MOM,

GET SOME CLOTHES ON!' I was so excited to see him, I had forgotten to finish dressing!"

-Annette Kuyper, mom of Sgt. Jared Kuyper, Minnesota Army Guard

My personal favorite is an excerpt from an e-mail sent to my friend, Lucretia Barbee, from her daughter, Capt. Mande Barbee, Oklahoma Army Guard. I can't help but wonder how many other Soldiers/Airmen would agree with her!

"Today was pretty stressful for me. I had what I like to call the INVASION of GENERALS!! I had to coordinate with an Afghan National Army general to get to use his motor pool at the palace to store some donations of vehicles coming in from India. Then I had to come back to the office and prepare a briefing for our new general who took over as the chief of OMC-A, who is a two-star. Then I had to go pick up a general from the Indian Army and take him to see the palace motor pool where his donated vehicles will be parked. Then I had to come back and brief the brief we had prepared for our section for the two-star. And to top it off, the two-star was 45 minutes late. I wonder if that is in the 'How to be a General Book'. Ya know, it probably says that the key to being a general is you must always, always, no matter what, keep people waiting at least 15 minutes on you and if it is a briefing that you are receiving from someone you must always make it at least 30 so by the time you get there they are squirming in their pants with nerves. Yep,

I bet that is what it says! Now this, of course, excludes all of the generals in the Oklahoma Army or Air Guard that I have ever come in contact with, just in case one of you or one of your friends happens to read this! Anyway, all in all the brief went fine and I actually think I knew what I was talking about and didn't get asked any questions I couldn't answer. So that was good!" 

CONCLUSION

‘THERE’S NO PLACE LIKE HOME..!’

After all the waiting, the anxiety and the prayers, they come home – tired, weary and glad to be with loved ones again. The homecoming celebrations may seem endless as our communities, churches and synagogues, schools, and businesses welcome them home. Family and friends gather round. All of this is expected and appreciated – usually. Sometimes it seems as if you will never have a moment alone with that precious son or daughter. Be patient! You have waited throughout the deployment for this joyous time. Thank goodness your child is safely home.

If your son or daughter is married and has their own family, you may feel like you are waiting in line for your turn to shower your child with affection and to become their center of attention, if only for a few moments. You want them to know how much you have missed them and have been concerned for their safety and wellbeing. You may feel hurt or neglected to not be included in every activity. STOP! Get a grip!

Encourage them to spend time with their spouse and children. Go to the ballgames or swim meets with them, but do not crowd them or become intrusive. Your returning Guard member has to make an adjustment. The spouse does as well. Even for the kids, the homecoming

can be difficult. The daily routine changes and this is stressful for most people, even if the change in routine is for a good reason.

Be supportive if young single Soldiers or Airmen want to reconnect with high school or college buddies, have dates, or stay out late. If you had a shaky relationship with your child before the deployment, keep in mind that the problem might still be there. Problems do not magically disappear. On the other hand, a new sense of maturity and responsibility may emerge and totally throw you for a loop. Where did that “kid” go? Who is this mature adult? Is this the same kid who left dirty socks and underwear on the floor?

This reunion and readjustment period will take time and patience. It will take understanding, not only of your Guardmember’s situation but for your own feelings as well. You have been riding an emotional rollercoaster since the deployment was announced. You have survived the triple loops, the dips and drops and the terrifying heights while traveling at tremendous speed. Thank goodness you have been strapped in or you would, most assuredly, have tumbled out. Now it is time to plant your feet on firm ground, move toward the exit, and head for home. 

APPENDIX

Acronyms

AAFES—Army and Air Force Exchange Service

ACU—Army Combat Uniform

AD—Active duty

ADSW—Active duty for special work

AFSC—Air Force Specialty Code

AG—Adjutant general

AGR—Active Guard Reserve

ANG—Air National Guard

ARNG—Army National Guard

AT—Annual training

AWOL—Absent without leave

BAQ—Basic allowance for quarters

BAS—Basic allowance for subsistence

BDU—Battle dress uniform (jungle, desert, cold weather)

BX—Base Exchange

CBHCO—Community Based Health Care Organization

CDR—Commander

CDS—Child Development Services

CG—Commanding general

CNGB—Chief, National Guard Bureau

CONUS—Continental United States

DA—Department of Army

DAF—Department of the Air Force

DEROS—Date of estimated return from overseas

DFAS—Defense Finance and Accounting System
DOB—Date of birth
DOD—Department of Defense
DUSTWUN—Duty Status/Whereabouts Unknown
EFMP—Exceptional Family Member Program
ESGR—Employer Support for Guard and Reserves
ETS—Expiration of term of service
FAC—Family assistance center
FCP—Family care plan
FLO—Family liaison office
FOUO—For official use only
FP—Family program
FRG—Family readiness group
FS—Family support
FSA—Family separation allowance
HAF—Headquarters United States Air Force
HOR—Home of record
HQDA—Headquarters, Department of the Army
HS—Home station
IDT—Inactive duty training
JAG—Judge advocate general
KIA—Killed in action
LES—Leave and earnings statement
MIA—Missing in action
MILPO—Military personnel office
MOS—Military occupational specialty
MWR—Morale, welfare, and recreation
NG—National Guard
NGB—National Guard Bureau

OCONUS—Outside continental United States

POA—Power of attorney

POC—Point of contact

POV—Privately owned vehicle

PX—Post Exchange

RC—Reserve component

RD—Rear detachment

RDC—Rear detachment commander

R&R—Rest and recreation

SBP—Survivor benefit plan

SFPD—State family program director

SGLI—Servicemen's Group Life Insurance

SIDPERS—Standard Installation/Division Personnel Reporting System

SJA—Staff judge advocate

TAG—The adjutant general

TFI—Total Force Initiative

TSGLI—Traumatic Servicemen's Group Life Insurance

UCMJ—Uniform Code of Military Justice

UTA—Unit training assembly

VA—Department of Veterans Affairs

VSO—Veterans Service Organization

WIA—Wounded in action

Air National Guard acronyms

ACC—Air Combat Command

ACS—Air Control Squadron

AE—Air-medical Evacuation

AMC—Air Mobility Command

ANG—Air National Guard
APS—Aerial Port Squadron
ARW—Air Refueling Wing
AS—Airlift Squadron
AW—Airlift Wing
CAT—Crisis Action Team
CBCS—Combat Communication Squadron
CCT—Combat Controller
CRRC—Combat Rubber Raider Craft
CRGE—Contingency Response Group-Element
CRTC—Combat Readiness Training Center
DEPSECDEF—Deputy Secretary of Defense
EOC—Emergency Operations Center
EMAC—Emergency Management Assistance Compact
EMEDS—Expeditionary Medical System
FEMA—Federal Emergency Management Agency
FORSCOM—Forces Command
FW—Fighter Wing
FPCON—Force Protection Condition
IAP—International Airport
JOA—Joint Operations Area
JOC—Joint Operations Center
JFCOM—Joint Forces Command
JFHQ—Joint Forces Headquarters-State
JTF—Joint Task Force
JRB—Joint Reserve Base
MAFFS—Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System
NAS—Naval Air Station
NGB—National Guard Bureau

NORTHCOM—Northern Command

PJ—Pararescuemen

RED HORSE—Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy
Operational Repair Squadron Engineers

RQS—Rescue Squadron

RQW—Rescue Wing

SAD—State Active Duty

SFS—Security Forces Squadron

STS—Special Tactics Squadron

TALCE—Tanker Airlift Control-Element

TRANSCOM—Transportation Command

USACE—US Army Corps of Engineers

HELPFUL WEB SITES

General

- ▶▶ www.guardfamily.org
- ▶▶ www.americasupportsyou.com
- ▶▶ www.military.com
- ▶▶ www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil
- ▶▶ www.militarymoms.net
- ▶▶ www.militaryonesource.com
- ▶▶ www.myarmylifetoo.com
- ▶▶ www.nmfa.org (National Military Family Association)
- ▶▶ www.seamlesstransition.va.gov/res_guard.asp (Veterans' Affairs Seamless Transition)

Financial Management

- ▶▶ www.saveandinvest.org (National Association of Securities Dealers Military Financial Education Campaign)
- ▶▶ www.collegecircle.com (Free Handbooks for College-Bound Students and their Federal and Military Families)

Legal Issues

- ▶▶ www.probono.net
- ▶▶ www.lawhelp.org

Military Pay Issues

- ▶▶ www.dfas.mil

Well-Being

- ▶▶ www.ncptsd.va.gov (National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)
- ▶▶ www.samhsa.gov/vets (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)

Veteran Service Organizations

- ▶▶ www.legion.org (American Legion)
- ▶▶ www.redcross.org (American Red Cross)
- ▶▶ www.amvets.org (American Veterans)
- ▶▶ www.armedforcesfoundation.org (Armed Forces Foundation)
- ▶▶ www.bva.org (Blinded Veterans Association)
- ▶▶ www.dav.org (Disabled American Veterans)
- ▶▶ www.iraqwarveterans.org (Iraq War Veterans Organization, Inc.) *Check out the Free for Troops section*
- ▶▶ www.iava.org (Iraq and Afghanistan Vets of America)
- ▶▶ www.jwv.org (Jewish War Veterans of the United States)
- ▶▶ www.purpleheart.org (Military Order of the Purple Heart)
- ▶▶ www.pva.org (Paralyzed Veterans of America)
- ▶▶ www.uso.org (United Service Organizations)
- ▶▶ www.vfw.org (Veterans of Foreign Wars)
- ▶▶ www.woundedwarriorproject.org (Wounded Warrior Project)

LINKS TO FREE STUFF FOR THE TROOPS

The following links are not intended as an endorsement by the National Guard in any way.

 Free computers for spouses or parents of deployed Soldier in ranks E1 - E5: www.operationhomelink.org/

 Free mail and gifts for children of deployed Soldiers: www.prweb.com/releases/2004/2/prweb106818.htm

 Free telephone cards: www.operationuplink.org/

 Sign up to sponsor a Soldier care package: <http://anysoldier.com/ForSoldiersOnly.cfm>

 Where commanders can sign up for mugs for unit troops: www.appreciateourtroops.org/forourtroops.shtml

 Free shoebox care package: www.operationshoebox.com/

 Free cookies: www.treatthetroops.org/

 Lowest airfare available: <http://bluestarmoms.org/airfare.html>

 Free care packages: <http://bluestarmoms.org/care.html>

 Free air conditioners and heaters: <http://66.241.249.83/>

 Free air travel for emergency leave and for the family members of injured Soldiers and airmen to travel to medical facilities: <http://www.heromiles.org/>

 Airline discounts for rest and recreation: www.bluestarmothers.org/airlinespecials.php

 Free books, DVDs and CDs: www.booksforsoldiers.com/forum/index.php

 Daily prayers and scriptures: <http://prayercentral.net/engage/militaryprayer/daily.php>

 Free care packages for family members to have sent to Soldiers and Airmen: <http://www.militarymoms.net/sot.html>

 Free care packages: <http://operationmilitarypride.org/smsignup.html>

 To "adopt" troops: www.soldiersangels.org/heroes/submit_a_soldier.php

 Free gifts and care packages: www.treatsfortroops.com/registration/index.php

*-compiled by Mr. Bruce S. Smith, Transition Assistance Advisor,
Pennsylvania National Guard*

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RANK INSIGNIA

	Army	Air Force
	No insignia	No insignia
E-1	Private (PV1)	Airman Basic (AB)
E-2	Private (PV2)	Airman (Amn)
E-3	Private First Class (PFC)	Airman First Class (A1C)
E-4	Corporal (CPL)	Senior Airman (SrA)
	Specialist (SPC)	
E-5	Sergeant (SGT)	Staff Sergeant (SSgt)
E-6	Staff Sergeant	Technical Sergeant
	(SSG)	(TSgt)
E-7	Sergeant First Class (SFC)	Master Sergeant
		First Sergeant (Master Sergeant)
E-8	Master Sergeant (MSG)	Senior Master Sergeant (SMSgt)
	First Sergeant (1SG)	First Sergeant (Senior Master Sergeant)

	Sergeant Major (SGM)	Chief Master Sergeant (CMSgt)
E-9		
	Command Sergeant Major (CSM)	First Sergeant (Chief Master Sergeant)
		Command Chief Master Sergeant
Sp Pay Gd		
	Sgt. Major of the Army (SMA)	Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force (CMAF)

	Army
W-1	 Warrant Officer One (WO1)
W-2	 Chief Warrant Officer Two (CW2)
W-3	 Chief Warrant Officer Three (CW3)
W-4	 Chief Warrant Officer Four (CW4)
W-5	 Master Chief Warrant Officer (CW5)

	Army/Air Force
O-1	 Second Lieutenant (Army - 2LT) (Air Force - 2d Lt) (USMC - 2dLt)
O-2	 First Lieutenant (Army - 1LT) (Air Force - 1st Lt) (USMC - 1Lt)
O-3	 Captain (Army - CPT) (Air Force - Capt) (USMC - Capt)
O-4	 Major (Army - MAJ) (Air Force - Maj) (USMC - Maj)
O-5	 Lieutenant Colonel (Army - LTC) (Air Force - Lt Col) (USMC - LtCol)
O-6	 Colonel (Army - COL) (Air Force - Col) (USMC - Col)
O-7	 Brigadier General (Army - BG) (Air Force - Brig Gen) (USMC - BGen)
O-8	 Major General (Army - MG) (Air Force Maj Gen) (USMC - MGen)
O-9	 Lieutenant General (Army - LTG) (Air Force - Lt Gen) (USMC - LtGen)
O-10	 General (Army - GEN) (Air Force - Gen) (USMC - Gen)



About the Author

Paula Sumrall is a retired educator and has also been a professional actress and singer. She grew up in Birmingham, Ala. A graduate of the University of Montevallo, she holds bachelor's and master's degrees in speech and theater. She also has done advanced studies at the University of Delaware, Loyola College, and Fresno-Pacific University. Her passion for Mickey Mouse, roller coasters, and crossword puzzles is surpassed only by her desire to serve the National Guard family. She has testified on Capitol Hill before the Senate Armed Services Committee in support of our Guard families and the National Guard Bureau Family Program and Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve. Paula and her husband, Maj. Gen. Mike Sumrall, live in the D.C. area with their three cats – Bob, Charley, and Jack.



Now, parents have a guidebook to understand and deal with the deployment of their National Guard sons and daughters. Packed full of wisdom and helpful hints, this book will assist parents during the deployment process: from how to use resources like the Family Readiness Group and Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve, to knowing how to contact your child overseas and what to consider when raising their dependents. *Our Sons, Our Daughters: a National Guard Parent's Guidebook to Deployment* by Paula Sumrall even includes an appendix with a list of Web sites for getting free stuff. This book is a must for the parent who wants to support their Citizen-Soldiers/Airmen and the important mission they've been called to do.

